

AAUW celebrates Foods from Lebanon



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Lebanese Food

Lebanese Food was always one of the country's principal attractions, and it has now largely passed the borders to become extremely popular in the West. Lebanese cuisine as a whole goes under the heading "health food". It is mostly based on cereals, in the shape of bread, bulgur (called crushed wheat or bittaboul) and rice. A large and varied assortment of vegetables and milk products accompany the above, and meat plays a relatively small part.

Menu

Appetizers: Red Wine is suggested as the drink.

- [Arabic Bread](#) and [Hommos Tahina](#)
- [Fatayer Bil Sabanikh](#)

First Course:

- [Grape Leave Rolls](#)
- [Cucumber Yoghurt Mix](#)
- [Stuffed Zucchini](#)

Salad:

- [Tabbouleh Libanaise](#)

Main Course:

- [Kibbi](#) (baked ground meat)
serve with plain yogurt or cucumber mix
- [Lubya](#) (green beans)

Desserts:

- [Baklava](#) and [Turkish Coffee](#)



Hummus Tahina

- 1 cup cooked or canned chickpeas
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed with a pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoon sesame paste (Tahina)
- 2 tablespoon parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

Drain warm chickpeas and reserve 1 tablespoon. Beat chickpeas in a food processor. Blend chickpeas with sesame paste, lemon juice, crushed garlic, and salt into a puree. Adjust flavor and consistency with lemon juice and salt if necessary (Hummus should be thick and smooth). Pour into serving bowl and pour a small amount of olive oil in center and garnish with the reserved chickpeas, chopped parsley and cumin. Cut the pita in triangles, heat and serve with Hummus Tahina.



Arabic Bread (Pita)

- 3 1/2 cups of all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of active dried yeast
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 1/4 cup of lukewarm water (body temperature is best)

Yield 6 to 8 loaves.

1. Measure the flour. Sift flours and salt together in a bowl. Stir in the sugar. It is important to mix the dry ingredients first.
2. Dissolve the yeast with the water, and then stir in the oil and pour into a large bowl.
3. Gradually beat the flour into yeast mixture, and then knead the mixture to make soft dough.
4. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 5 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic. If you are using a food processor, run the machine for 1 minute. Add the dry ingredients first, then gradually add the liquids, Start at a low speed, and move up slowly.



5. Place the dough in a large bowl, dusted with extra flour. You can also use olive oil to grease the bowl. This will prevent the dough from sticking to the surface of the bowl. Cover the bowl with a damp kitchen towel and leave to rise in a warm place free of air drafts for 1 1/2 hour to 2 hours, or until doubled in bulk. I usually place my dough to rise in the cool oven.
6. Punch down the dough. On a floured surface, make a rope-like shape. Pinch off the dough to form 6 to 8 equal pieces, depending on how thin or thick you like your bread to be.
7. Roll out each ball of dough, with a rolling pin, into a circle of about 10 inches (25cm) and a thickness of 1/4 inch (6mm). Set aside covered for ten minutes.
8. Place dough in a preheated oven with temperature of 220 degrees C or 450 degrees F.
9. Cook the bread for 3 to 5 minutes. Your bread is ready when the hollow pocket has formed and the bread is slightly browned on the edges and on the top.
10. Arabic bread is best eaten hot out of the oven because it tends to dry out quickly. If you want to store the bread for later consumption, allow the bread to cool, flatten, then store in plastic bags. You can refrigerate or freeze the bread.

Fatayer Bil Sabanikh (Spinach Pies)

Use dairy department Crescent Rolls or make the dough with the Arabic bread recipe. Two pounds Lebanese Bread dough. Olive oil for baking

Filling:

- 2 cups finely chopped spinach leaves
- 1/2 cup finely chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup finely chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh mint or
1 teaspoon dried mint
- 1/2 cup finely chopped spring onions
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, lightly fried in olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon Zaatar Mixture (Mediterranean store) or
thyme
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice (approximately)



This recipe requires only the leaves of the spinach. Makes: 24 turnovers - Cooking time: 20 minutes.

Place the bread dough in a warm place and allow rising. Mix all the filling ingredients together. When the bread dough has risen, roll out on a floured board to $\frac{1}{4}$ in thickness and cut into 4 inch squares. Place a tablespoon of filling on each square of dough and fold to form a triangle shaped pie.

Secure edges together by folding them over and pressing firmly down with fork prongs. Place the pies on a well oiled baking tray and brush each one with oil. Bake in a hot oven, 425 degrees F until lightly golden. Serve hot or cold.

Grape Leave Rolls (MAHSHI WARAK AREESH)

1 teaspoon of salt
1/2 cup rice
2 pounds of finely ground beef or lamb
1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
3 tablespoons of lemon juice
1 teaspoon of allspice
1 small can of tomato sauce
Fresh picked tender grape leaves, steamed with lemon juice until tender



Stuffing: Mix rice with cinnamon, allspice, tomato sauce and salt. Then add ground meat and mix well. Wash grape leaves and lay flat with dull side up. Place a small amount of meat near stem section of leaf. Curl over the leaf to cover meat, fold in the sides and roll the leaf into a cigar shape. On the bottom of pan place unstuffed grape leaves in pan and add 2 cups of water. Cook on high until water boils, lower heat and cook for another half hour or until rice is cooked. Place a dish on top of grape leaves while cooking to keep them down. When grape leaves are cooked add 3 tablespoons of lemon juice.

Kousa mihshi (Stuffed Zucchini)

8 medium zucchini
1 pound ground beef or lamb
1/2 cup short grain rice
1 can stewed red tomatoes
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon of dried mint
1 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon of black pepper
1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
2 cups water
4 tablespoon lemon juice



Wash zucchini well. Using a knife remove the stems. Optional to cut the zucchini in half across the center horizontally. Hollow out each half using an apple corer carefully so the skin does not get punctured.

Filling: Mix meat with rice and spices. Stuff zucchini, shake each after filling it so that the filling is well distributed (do not over stuff). Arrange in a pot. Add lemon juice. Add 2 cups of water with tomatoes, and a dash of salt with the stuffed zucchini in a pot over medium heat. Invert a plate on top. Cook for 1/2 hour or until squash is tender. Cook for 5 minutes. Serve zucchini and sauce hot together in a large bowl.

Cucumber Yoghurt (Leban) Sauce

Either make the yoghurt or purchase plain yoghurt (Daisy or Mountain High brands suggested) as it needs to be thick. Mix it with one thinly sliced Armenian cucumber (don't peel), 2 cloves mashed garlic, and 2 tablespoon fresh chopped dill.

Home made Yoghurt:

8 cups milk, 1/2 cup yoghurt, 1 teaspoon salt.

Bring milk to a boil. Place aside until tepid. (About 120 degrees) Stir in yoghurt base (called rabee). Cover pot with lid. Wrap pot with a towels. Place in a warm place for 6 hours. Remove lid. Stir in salt. Cool in refrigerator for 3 hours before serving.



Yoghurt Cheese: (Lebnee): Pour the cold yoghurt into a cheese cloth bag or a coffee filter inside a colander. Let drain sitting in a bowl for 12 hours. This cheese is often served as an appetizer with pita triangles.

Kibbi bil sanieh (Baked Kibbi)

2 1/2 pounds finely ground lean beef or lamb
1 cup washed bulgur (#1 fine cracked wheat)
2 teaspoons ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon salt 1/2 teaspoon pepper



Filing:

2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 pound ground meat, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice,
a dash of black pepper, 1 cup browned pine nuts

Filling: Sauté onion with olive oil over medium heat. Stir in 1/2 pound meat, salt, and spices. Cook for 15 minutes till tender. Remove from heat. Mix in pine nuts.

Kibbi: Rinse and soak bulgur about ten minutes. Drain, then press to remove excess water as much as possible. Run the 2 1/2 pounds meat and onion through a food processor two times. Remove meat mixture. Add bulgur to meat and add salt and spices and knead with your hands.

Divide meat mixture into two parts, and divide each half into 4 balls. Flatten each ball between your wet palms (use cold water). Place the 4 flattened balls in a greased oven tray (usually 9 x 13). Spread the 4 balls evenly using your wet palms (about 3 cm thick). Spread the filling over meat. Cover filling with the rest of the meat mixture repeating the same procedure as before. You may need to wet your hands to spread the meat evenly. Run a knife blade around edge of tray, then score deeply into diamond shapes. Spread pats of butter out over top until you have used 1/2 cube. Bake in a moderate heat oven (350 degrees) for 30 minutes. Serve hot with plain yoghurt.

Tabbouleh Libanaise

- 1 cup bulgur, number 1 fine cracked wheat
- 2 - 3 cups finely chopped parsley (about 2 large bunches)
- 3 firm red tomatoes, washed and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
- 2 lemons squeezed - need all the juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil



Wash all vegetables and drain well. Wash the bulgur several times and drain. Soak bulgur in lemon juice and olive oil for 20 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes, salt, pepper, mint, and parsley and mix all ingredients well. Serve Tabbouleh with crisp romaine lettuce leaves as scoopers.

Lubya (Green Beans)

- 2 pounds green beans, string and snip off the ends, snip each bean into two and wash
- 1 pound tomatoes, washed, peeled and chopped or
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1/2 pound thinly sliced beef in one inch pieces
- 1 1/2 chopped onion
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- a dash of ground allspice
- a dash of sugar
- 2 heads garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 cup water



Brown onion and garlic in oil over high heat, stir for 5 minutes. Add beans and beef, cook for 10 minutes, stir occasionally. Add tomato, salt, sugar, allspice, and water. Cover. Bring to a boil. Simmer over low heat for 15 minutes or till tender.

Baklava

1 (16 ounce) package phyllo dough
1 pound chopped nuts
1 cup butter
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup white sugar
1 cup honey



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter the bottoms and sides of a 9x13 inch pan. Chop nuts and toss with cinnamon. Set aside. Unroll phyllo dough. Cut whole stack in half to fit pan. Cover phyllo with a dampened cloth to keep from drying out as you work. Place two sheets of dough in pan, butter thoroughly. Repeat dough and butter until you have 8 sheets layered. Sprinkle nut mixture on top. Top with sheets of dough and butter, layering as you go until you have 8 sheets deep on top. Using a sharp knife cut into diamond shapes all the way to the bottom of the pan. You may cut into 4 long rows then make diagonal cuts. Bake for about 45 minutes until baklava is golden and crisp.

Make honey mixture while baklava is baking. Boil sugar and water until sugar is melted. Add vanilla and honey. Simmer for about 20 minutes. Remove baklava from oven and immediately spoon sauce over it evenly. Let cool. This freezes well. Leave it uncovered as it gets soggy if it is wrapped up. (option use rose water in place of honey and vanilla.)

Serve with Turkish coffee